



EM Recovery NEWS FLASH

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Sound Project Management, Safe and Efficient Work Lead to Savings for More Recovery Act Cleanup

IDAHO FALLS, Idaho - Sound management practices and safe, efficient work have led to cost savings and rapid progress in the Idaho site's American Recovery and Reinvestment Act projects. The efficiencies have freed up \$12 million for additional Cold War cleanup.

That \$12 million from the Recovery Act is being used to exhume targeted buried waste from a quarter-acre portion of a landfill called Pit 9 so it can be disposed permanently and safely.

The additional cleanup, scheduled for completion in spring 2012, is part of the Idaho site's broader work to accelerate legacy waste removal in 5.69 acres of a disposal area, a cleanup project that protects the Snake River Plain Aquifer.

Recovery Act workers with CH2M-WG Idaho, the Idaho site's main cleanup contractor, are digging up contaminated waste such as filters and solvents that were buried in the pit in the 1960s. Some of it is transuranic waste that will be safely and permanently disposed at DOE's Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in New Mexico. That waste is contaminated with radioactive elements that have atomic numbers greater than uranium.

The Pit 9 waste was generated during nuclear weapons production at Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site in Colorado. EM cleaned up and closed Rocky Flats several years ago.

In 2004, crews in a shielded enclosure removed waste from Pit 9 using an excavator and identified exhumed waste. That targeted waste retrieval approach, which is currently being employed at the Idaho site, helped lead to a 2008 Record of Decision – signed by DOE, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and Idaho Department of Environmental Quality – to exhume and ship 7,485 cubic meters of targeted waste from the Subsurface Disposal Area (SDA) for disposal. That amount of waste would fill three Olympic swimming pools.

"Retrieving buried waste from Pit 9 is just another example of DOE's commitment to the people of Idaho to remove the targeted buried waste there and continue to protect the Snake River Plain Aquifer," said Jim Cooper, acting Deputy Manager of DOE's Idaho Cleanup Project (ICP).

Last year, Recovery Act workers focused cleanup efforts on other portions of the disposal area.

In an \$8.2 million Recovery Act project completed five weeks ahead of schedule, crews grouted 21 buried waste locations to inhibit rain and snow melt from infiltrating them. Ultimately, an engineered barrier will be built over the entire project area to prevent infiltration.



Top: Workers sort through exhumed waste in a glovebox, or shielded enclosure, to repackage it for future shipment off site.

Left: Shown here is a glovebox containing Pit 9 waste that is sorted and repackaged by Recovery Act workers for shipment to disposal sites.

Bottom: Waste exhumation activities are under way at Pit 9.

